

# Discord in the Old Man's Place

## One Shorty, a Stranger, Produces a Fourth Ten Spot and Cashes In.

"Somebody in the Good Book," said old man Greenlaw with an air of profound conviction, "it's wrote down that there's a heap of 'cain't' did, but how there's a 'mazin' few what makes good. Proves how draw poker ain't really changed none since way back in the Middle Ages when Providence done interposed it in the betterment of the human race."

"Of course there's been improvements. It ain't none of the works of Providence that ain't been improved considerable 'long of somebody findin' out what was wrong an' puttin' out better ways of doin' things. That's what the Good Book says in a other place. 'The Lord made the country an' men made towns.'"

"Everybody knows how towns is mo' valuable in open country. Yo' can't buy corner lots in Arkansas City for no such money as yo' can get for five acres of woodland for. Proves how man's work is only the best in the long run."

"But that ain't neither here nor there. First is how them 'cain't' is caught up an' passed as frequent as they be. 'Pears like there's a great moral lesson in it whar'd improve a man's game a heap if he'd give heed to it."

"And the old man looked at Jake Winterbottom. It was hard to say whether sorrow or reproach was the dominant emotion in his mind at the moment. Which ever it was there was no doubt about the other being a close second."

"Drinks is on me," said Winterbottom promptly enough. "Let's liquor." And after the suggestion had met with a hearty and unanimous response he said casually to the old man, "Yo' all c'n charge that to me. I'm some short of change this evenin'."

Again sorrow and reproach struggled for preeminence in the old man's gaze as he fixed it on the untroubled visage of his old enemy and confidant. After looking long he said:

"I reckon 't ain't nothin' else c'n be did, bein's yo' all is done had yo' order filled. It'd sho' been mo' gentled if yo' all'd let me know afore I set 'em up how I might've expected."

"It's wrote down somes, but I ain't no ways 'bout it," said Winterbottom. "How if yo' give me a tinch he'll take a holla, like. 'Pears like I done did enough, Jake, when I staked yo' all to that there poker game, an' yo' lose for hundred on me, 'long of a scandalous bad play, 'thouten hangin' me up for six bits wuth of good liquor afterwards. 'Pears like that's considerable p'umptuous."

"Who's p'umptuous?" demanded Winterbottom with some show of temper. "Yo' all pears to be some like a poll parrot. Mobbe yo'd be a heap better off if yo' didn't do so much to say. An' who done made a scandalous bad play? I done lose for hundred right enough. It's ain't no question of that. Is yo' all lookin' for a man to win all the time?"

"No, not all the time, Jake," replied old man Greenlaw, changing his tone somewhat as he noticed the other's heat. "Stands to reason there can't nobody win all the pots he plays in. Wouldn't nobody set in with him, not frequent they wouldn't, if he done that."

"But when I look a man into a freeze-out with a ortery lookin' stranger like that yo' all to me, natchally I'm lookin' for him to quit winner at the end of the game. An' it sho' was scandalous, Jake, for yo' all to tap him on yo' own deal 'thouten no better idea of what he really had."

"Pears like yo' didn't play no expert game. Yo'd oughter knowed he was liable for to call an' yo' know yo' own self what yo' want. No ways 'pared for him a-doin' of that. Proves what I done said. There's a heap what'll call an' there's a mazin' few what'll p'ared."

"Mobbe if yo' all knowed mo' yo'd talk less," retorted Winterbottom now thoroughly exasperated. "I doled him three tens all right and I filled my flush on the draw, didn't I? How was I to know how he done felt out a fo' ten? I didn't take no chances on aces, did I? Any fool'd know how a man is liable for to hold out a ace, but who's a-lookin' for a yap like him puttin' a ten spot in his sleeve?"

"Mo' 'n that," he continued with increasing wrath, "it'd 'a' been all right after all, if yo' all hadn't been so hellorin' an' hasty buttin' in with yo' cussed old bung-starter like yo' done. I had mo' in a hundred mo' to go on with, an' I'd 'a' won the freeze-out easy enough if yo' all hadn't 'a' busted up the game."

"Mobbe so, Mobbe so, Jake," returned the old man, seeing that he had pushed the argument too far and evidently desirous of avoiding a complete breach with a valuable ally. "Yo' all might've win out if yo'd played to a finish, but I put it to yo', Jake, if it didn't look bad."

"An' it'd ain't no call for yo' all to talk disreputous 'bout a bung-starter. Hit's a heap better in a gun if yo' know how to use it, an' I'd a settled things right satisfactory if that there delegation hadn't 'a' come in just when they did."

"I reckon there must 'a' been somes'n diddin' 'round here to-day," observed Jim Blaisdell, who with the others in the room had listened with growing surprise and concern to the hostile talk. "Mobbe it might be a good thing for to let us know what 'twas. 'Pears like it was some interestin'."

"It'd 'a' been a heap mo' interestin' if it'd 'a' been some different," said Winterbottom bitterly, "an' it'd 'a' been different if yo' all hadn't buttin' in like he done. Now he's a-greenlaw buttin' to blame me."

And ignoring the old man's remonstrance, the grizzled spot told of the game they were quarrelling about.

It appeared that a very insignificant looking stranger had entered old man Greenlaw's saloon early in the day when Winterbottom and the old man sat there alone, and after troubling the house according to the established custom had signified his desire for some sort of amusement with which he might beguile the time that would elapse before the boat then at the levee should continue on down the river.

He proved amenable to the old man's suggestion of a game of draw poker, and a freecount for \$500 a side was speedily arranged to be played by himself and Winterbottom. As he proved to be an unexpectedly good player the contest was prolonged for some time and had concluded in the way outlined in the preceding dialogue.

He had called Winterbottom's big bet with his whole pile, and had shown down four tens, which Winterbottom main-

# KEPT HIS POKER NERVE IN HAND

## Facing a Pistol, Russell Played the Deal Out and Took In the Pot That Saved Him.

"One hears a lot about the nerve that has been shown in poker games," said the white haired, young looking man in the club smoking room, "but when you boil down the situations it is not often that you find a conspicuous instance of what I call nerve."

"When you hear about a man risking \$5,000 or \$10,000 on the chance of a single hand, you have to know how important the sum is to him at that time before you can judge of how much nerve it took for him to do it."

"But money isn't the only thing a man can have at stake in a poker game. He may risk his reputation, his happiness and that of others or even his life itself at the table. In fact I have seen a man cast the hazard of all three on the chance of a single hand at poker. And it was when I watched him playing the hand, knowing as I did what it meant to him, that I first realized what 'poker nerve' really meant."

His name was Russell. I know him in Detroit in 1908 and 1907. Russell was not one of the well known family of that name in Detroit, but he was a fairly prosperous young business man, happily married and living in a comfortable home of his own. Our acquaintance, beginning in a business way, ripened into friendship, and after a time I went to live at his house paying board of course, but really as one of the family.

"He did not neglect his home or his business, but he was as fond of sport as I was, and we both made a rather thorough acquaintance with everything of a sporting character that was to be found in or around Detroit in those days, and Detroit was by no means the slowest city in the West at that time."

"It was easy to make money then, and as was natural enough, it was also easy to lose it, so I was not so greatly surprised as I might have been when Russell told me one day that he had suddenly found himself in a really desperate condition."

A series of heavy losses in quick succession had used up all his available capital, and he had stretched his credit almost to the breaking point in making a large purchase of goods in the East. The consignment was to have reached him that very day, and if it had come he could have squared himself with a narrow margin to the good and restored credit."

A telegram had just reached him, however, telling of the total loss in the lower part of the Detroit River of the steamer on which his goods were shipped.

"It meant complete ruin to him. His own money and the little individual fortune his wife had had were entirely swallowed up in previous disasters. He had notes to meet on the following day amounting to over \$12,000 and had already obtained the furthest possible extension on them, the banks having stretched a point to accommodate him on the strength of the coming consignment."

To offset his liabilities he had a small equity in his heavily mortgaged home, a house that would have brought nothing at a forced sale under the circumstances, a really trivial balance in the two banks that held his notes for payment, and cash collections that he had made that day but had not deposited, amounting to about \$3,000. And he knew of no possibility of raising any money elsewhere.

"I knew of no way in which I could help him, though I might have raised \$1,000 for him next day, for I was an employee and was living well up to my income. The few hundreds I had in cash were manifestly of no service in such an emergency and I felt that I could not offer any strong recommendation when he told me what he proposed to do."

"As he saw it he was practically dis-honored already. To maintain his credit he had stretched the truth so badly that the banks would be merciless and the money he had in hand would only reduce the amount of his indebtedness, which was hopeless anyhow. And he said he was going to gamble that night as he never had before. If he lost he would be no worse off and he might win out. So we talked it over pretty carefully."

"If there was a square game of faro going in Detroit at that time neither of us knew of it, and we did not believe there was. One of two routes games that we knew of were open to the same objection, and anyhow neither of us had any fancy for roulette. But Russell, as I knew, was a fairly good poker player, though I had never seen him in a really big game and he said he had never played in one."

"There was a game in Windsor, however, run by a professional named Scotty Calkins, who had the reputation of being a square gambler and in whose place big money was constantly changing hands. It was a well known resort of some of the best known poker players in the West and, as Russell said, he was likely to get a run for his money there whatever the result might be."

"I knew Calkins personally and I believed that he played a square game himself, though of course I could not know anything about the others who were likely to sit in at the game, and when Russell asked me I agreed readily enough to introduce him. The question of the right and the wrong of what he proposed to do did not trouble me greatly. Under the circumstances I imagine I would probably have done the same thing, and anyhow I was not acting as another man's conscience."

"So we went over to Windsor together and we found a five handed game already in progress when we arrived at about 9 o'clock. Calkins was not one of the players. He told me afterward that he did not care to play against two men who were in the game, but he agreed readily enough to arrange for a seat for Russell, and he was an expert game, he said, and there was no objection made when he took a seat well back and watched the play. Of course I made no effort to lose any man's hands, but I was a spectator of the play. Calkins himself was another, and there were two or three more, for it was really a big game."

"They had started in the afternoon with \$1,000 apiece to play table stakes, but the game had been marked by sharp fluctuations and several of the players had bought a second and third time, so that some of them had much as \$2,000 in front of them, and there was nearly \$20,000 on the table."

"Russell made a careful survey before he put his entire roll on the line, the stack that was handed to him."

"They were playing a five dollar ante call \$10, and it was not infrequently that enough raising would be done before the draw to get \$100 or even \$200 in the pot by the time cards were called for."

"Of course looking on as I was at the play of the five handed game, the cards that were dealt, I could not judge Russell's play accurately, but it seemed to me that he was taking longer chances on incomplete hands than he ought to do, relying on the draw more than he was justified in doing; and he told me afterward that this was really the fact. He figured that his chances for a killing were better in cases he should have been to fill an unexpected hand than they would be if he should play a close game and only go in on strong cards. It was a desperate line of play, but his only hope was in the big pots, and what he was losing for was the opportunity to catch some of the others by a surprise."

Maybe it was good poker under the circumstances, but it certainly proved expensive during the first part of the game. He chipped away nearly \$1,000 in small sums before the draw before the lightning struck, but continuing served as a good indication to me. He did not apparently lose his nerve, and he threw down without a sign of perturbation hand after hand that he failed to make, but he made up his mind to that line of play, and he was not to be swayed from it even by the loss of a third of his capital."

Of course the other players saw all this as plainly as I did, and so far as they played against him they took advantage of it, but as nearly as I could size up the game they were playing fairly and, no partnerships were involved. In fact I believe to this day that the game was perfectly square."

"One thing that strengthened that impression was the fact that Russell's first considerable winning in the game was made against the dealer."

"It was Russell's ante and he had put up the usual \$5. Two other men came in, one dropped and Russell raised \$10. Russell stayed and the next man made it \$10 more. It looked as if he had been afraid of losing customers on the first round and the next man dropped in the face of the double raise, but the dealer trailed and Russell closed the pot and called for three cards. He had put up \$30 to draw to a pair, and the man stood out. As it was his first bet he threw in a white chip."

The dealer took two cards and after looking at them he said, seeing the white chip and the \$30 more, "Then Russell looked at his draw and bet \$50 more. It looked like a bluff, and as they were not playing straight the least he could do was bluff, but he stood out. He had caught a king and two deuces in the draw, and as the dealer's hand was a queen full Russell took the pot."

"After that luck ran his way for half a dozen rounds and three times he won on his own deal, so that he was some \$5,000 ahead of the game when he got the deal again, and I saw one of the players, a Mississippi River man named Ferguson, whom I knew by reputation as a bad man with a gun, looking at him with evident suspicion. Almost instantly I had the thought that he was about to draw, but I was not prepared to see it come off. Ferguson was also a winner, having some \$1,000 in front of him, and as it appeared that he was about to draw, I pushed a strong hand on the deal. He raised before the draw when it came to him and Russell, as he did almost every deal, stayed against the draw. There was some raising, the second round it narrowed down to Ferguson, Russell and another man only, but there was about \$500 in the pot when the third man closed it and called for two cards."

Then Ferguson stood pat, and when Russell announced that he was taking one and laid it off the deck Ferguson showed his whole stack forward and drew a gun. Then he exclaimed with an oath, "That's a crooked deal. I've got you beat unless you have four, but I don't care. I'll bet you \$1,000 that I'll win the pot unless you show me four. If you do, I'll bet you \$1,000 on the side that you dare not."

Then he looked at his draw and after only a moment's hesitation he called Ferguson a bet, showing down a ten full. He had drawn to tens up and Ferguson's hand was a flush, ace high.

"I don't think I could ever anybody in the room expected the shot. I know I did. But Ferguson, though his finger was on the trigger, lowered his weapon. He said, 'You're right, I can't do it.'"

"You can't," he said with a hard laugh, "and you certainly have your nerve with you. I reckon it would cost more than it would come to to shoot."

And the game broke up. Russell had won out.

Man the Only Animal That Follows a Trail That Was.

Spurring, properly speaking, means following footprints; but the term commonly implies much more than that, and signifies holding the trail by means of the many marks an animal leaves behind on its path.

It is essentially tracking by sight when the quarry is a beast, but it is the use of the eyes in the pursuit of invisible game that distinguishes man, the hunter, from other animals.

There is no reason to think that any animal, other than man, employs eyesight to any material extent for this purpose, says the "Strand." Conspicuous tracks, it is true, may catch the eye of the hunter, but the questing for prey, and draw attention to the fact that a possible victim has passed by. But it is hardly to be believed that either of these animals, though in fact they have a knowledge of the shape and structure of the feet such as is necessary for telling the nature of the species, has left the questing for prey to the sense of smell. Snail will tell the tracks of a hare, and a hare will tell the tracks of a fox it would be unwise to follow; and the gradual waxing or waning of the scent in this or that direction will indicate the road that has to be chosen if the quest is to be crowned with success.

These essentials are learnt by the sense of smell. Snail will tell the tracks of a hare, and a hare will tell the tracks of a fox it would be unwise to follow; and the gradual waxing or waning of the scent in this or that direction will indicate the road that has to be chosen if the quest is to be crowned with success.

To man alone, then, is confined the power of knowing things by sight. Not that the knowledge is instinctive. It has to be acquired by strenuous application and long practice; and only the individual with keen visualizing power and sound judgment can hope to make a successful tracker and attain proficiency in the science.

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## Case of R. T. C. and Other Trotters Made by Blacksmith

"I notice," remarked a veteran horseman, "that the man who discovered the champion ploughman winning trotter R. T. C., 2:00 1/4, whose earnings on the Grand Circuit in 1911 exceeded \$25,000, is willing to give the young farmer who broke and drove the gelding during his colt days some of the credit for making the colt days of Princechar, the great horse he is to-day. I like that, for it indicates the proper spirit and leaves something to the horse's natural ability. Most trainers like to have folks believe that a horse would remain in obscurity unless he happened to drop into their hands."

"It was a mistake to term R. T. C., 2:00 1/4, the 'plough horse trotter,' but it sounded well. Some folks had a mental picture of the gelding pulling a plough in a Delaware cornfield one day and beating the Grand Circuit champions the next month or two. What really happened was this:

"A very well bred trotting mare with a high turn of speed happened to be owned by a Delaware farmer, who mated her with a good trotting stallion, one speedy enough to take a record of 2:13 1/2, and win many races, as his sire before him had done. The progeny happened to be foaled on the farm, and in common with the other horses placed by destiny on the same farm to do menial tasks, was put at work and performed well whatever task was allotted to him."

"The fact that he was a well bred trotter had nothing at all to do with it. In fact I think he was all the better fitted for general purpose performances, because of that fact, for I have frequently seen a half bred or trotting bred horse of 1,100 pounds or more make horses of commoner clay of several hundred pounds greater weight take a back seat when a matter of hard work was the test. Blood will tell always in man or beast, and I'll wager R. T. C., 2:00 1/4, held up his end no matter where they put him."

"But he didn't plough and harrow all the time. When there was an errand in town which called for speedy trips he was hitched to a light wagon, and in the evening you know the average country lad likes to take his sweetheart for a buggy ride. A level stretch of road with the moon shining down its length and a pretty girl by your side are inspiring, and Delaware folks say that R. T. C. got most of his education at the trot under such circumstances. As Trainer Biggs, who subsequently bought the horse for \$300, says, 'R. T. C., 2:00 1/4, was never trained till I got him, but he had been to night school.'"

"You will infer that a young woman probably had something to do with the discovery of the gelding's natural speed, and it was another woman who was directly responsible for his future career. Trainer Biggs, whom everybody in Delaware and Maryland knows and swears by, was driving along a Delaware turnpike one day accompanied by his wife. A fast mare with a record close to 2:20 over a half mile track was between the shafts."

"A young man driving a rangy chestnut gelding came along and challenged the professional reinsman to an impromptu race on the road. Biggs thought he could put the extra weight and beat any trotter thereabout, but to his amazement the gelding beat him easily. Mrs. Biggs teased her husband about it that night and urged him to buy the gelding. Biggs had learned that the owner was a farmer named Cochrane."

"Mr. Cochrane offered to sell the horse for \$100 and Biggs tried to interest a couple of wealthy horsemen, apparently being loath to take a chance himself at the price. One man who came to look at the horse wouldn't let him be hitched or even brought out of the stable when he saw the collar marks on his neck where the white hairs gave evidence of hard work. Biggs was to have had a commission of \$10, or 10 per cent, for making

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